Living City

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WORD OF LIFE

"I tell you solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move; nothing would be impossible for you."

(Matthew 17:20)

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How often in life we feel the need of a helping hand, yet all the while we know that no one on earth can really solve our problem! It is then that almost unconsciously we turn to Someone who can make the impossible possible. This Someone is Jesus.

Listen to what he tells you: *"I tell you solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move; nothing would be impossible for you."*

It is obvious that the expression "to move mountains" is not to be taken literally. Jesus never promised his disciples the power to perform spectacular miracles for the sake of astonishing the crowds. In fact, if you look through the entire history of the Church I don't think you will find a single saint who has moved mountains by means of faith. "To move mountains" is a hyperbole, an intentionally exaggerated statement used to impress upon the disciples that nothing would be impossible to them if they had faith.

Every miracle that Jesus worked, either directly or through his disciples, was always performed in view of the kingdom of God, or the Gospel, or some person's salvation. Moving a mountain would not serve this purpose.

The comparison with the "size of a mustard seed" points to the fact that Jesus is not asking you for a faith of any particular magnitude, but rather for a faith that is authentic. And the characteristic of authentic faith is exclusive reliance on God and not on your own capacity.

If you are assailed by doubt or vacillate in your faith, this means that you do not yet fully trust in God: your faith is weak and is not as fruitful as it could be, because it is still based on your own strength and on human logic.

On the other hand, those who trust God fully let God himself act in their lives, and to God nothing is impossible.

The faith that Jesus wants of his disciples is precisely that attitude of total trust which allows God himself to manifest his power. Such faith, that can move mountains, is not reserved for exceptional people. Every believer can and must have this faith.

"I tell you solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move; nothing would be impossible for you."

It is believed that Jesus said these words to his disciples as he was about to send them out on their mission.

They could have easily been frightened and discouraged, knowing they were only a handful of people, unprepared and without special talents, facing the countless numbers to whom the message of the Gospel had to be given.

It is easy to lose heart when confronted with people who are interested in everything but the kingdom of God.

The task can seem impossible.

This is why Jesus reassures his followers that by faith they will move the "mountains" of the world's indifference and lack of interest.

If they have faith, nothing will be impossible to them.

This sentence may also be applied to all the other circumstances of life, as long as the intention is to further the cause of the Gospel and to bring about people's salvation.

At times, in the face of insurmountable difficulties, we may be tempted to not even turn to God. Human logic may tell us: forget about it, it is no use anyway.

But it is in these very moments that Jesus encourages us not to

give up and to turn to God in trust. In one way or another he will answer us.

This is what happened to Lily.

Only a few months had passed since the day she had arrived in Belgium, full of hope, and found a job among the Flemish. But now her heart was heavy with feelings of dismay and loneliness.

She felt as if there were an insurmountable barrier between her and the other young women with whom she lived and worked. She felt isolated, a stranger among the very people she wanted only to love.

It was all because of the effort to speak a language that was neither hers nor theirs. She had been told that everyone in Belgium spoke French, so she had learned it. But when she came into direct contact with the Flemish, she found out that they only learn French in school, and are usually reluctant to speak it.

She had tried everything in order to move the mountain that separated her from the others, but to no avail. What could she do for them?

That evening, for instance, Hilda, one of the girls in her residence, had come in with a very sad face and gone straight to her room without eating. Lily had started to follow her, but had hesitated and then stopped outside her door. She had stood there for a moment, wanting to knock but wondering how she would make herself understood. Then, once again, she had given up.

The following morning she went to church and knelt down in one of the last pews. She buried her face in her hands to hide her tears. That was the only place where she did not have to speak another language, where there was no need even to explain herself, because there was Someone who could understand her even without words.

The certainty of being understood gave her the courage to ask Jesus in her anguish: "Why can't I share the crosses of my friends, and tell them what you made me understand when I first found you: that every suffering is love." She stayed there in front of the tabernacle as though waiting for an answer from him, the one who had given light to her every darkness.

Her eyes fell upon the Gospel for that day: "Be brave. I have conquered the world" (John 16: 33). These words were like a soothing balm to her heart and she felt at peace.

Returning home for breakfast, she ran into Anne, the housekeeper. After saying good morning, she followed her into the kitchen, where, without saying a word, she began helping her prepare breakfast.

The first girl to come downstairs was Hilda. She came into the kitchen for a quick cup of coffee, carefully trying to avoid everyone. But when she saw Lily she stopped short. Lily's peace had touched her more powerfully than any word could have.

That evening, as Lily was on her way home, Hilda caught up to her and, trying hard to make herself understood, she whispered: "Words are not necessary; with your life you told me today that I too must love."

The mountain had been moved.

"I tell you solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move; nothing would be impossible for you."

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

Each month a "Word of Life" appears in Living City or in its Supplement. The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the word of life.

R.D.: In May our taxes were due on our home and I began to panic when the reminder notice arrived. Because of so many unexpected expenses we found ourselves unprepared for the large amount that was due. Also other bills arrived at the same time, and I felt overwhelmed. That night, worried and afraid, I couldn't sleep. I thought to myself, "Also on the cross, Jesus, you experienced fear; I'm happy at least that this suffering makes me a little bit similar to you."

The next day I woke up exhausted and still the worry owned me. I prayed for light and help. This month's word of life came to mind, "Sell your possessions and give alms. Get yourselves purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and no moth destroy it," and I realized that I had a possession that I was rich in: my worries.

I started again to believe in the love of God for me, and to trust my Father in heaven who counts even the hairs on my head. I began again to try to live the present moment well: cleaning the house "for Jesus", taking care of the children "for him".

A few days later our accountant called us to come in to do our income tax return. When the forms were completed he added up the the state and federal return and it turned out that the total was twenty dollars more than what we needed.

Once again I saw that he is never outdone in generosity.

Mr. B: I enjoy reading very much but the only time available to read is when I come in for meals after the day's work is finished. This, however is also the time when the family is together and we can share the events of the day. In my effort to be loving I decided to stop reading when someone spoke to me. What I would do sometimes was put my finger in the book so that when the discussion was pretty well settled I could drift back to reading. I would even try to to maneuver the discussion to a conclusion quickly to return to my favorite pastime.

When the word of life arrived, "He had loved his own in this world, and would show his love for them to the end" (Jn. 13,1), I became aware that I was not loving to the end. Things changed. When people spoke to me I began to put aside my reading, I gave them all my attention and I made certain they were finished before I continued reading. It was a little effort, but everyone noticed it and the atmosphere in the house changed considerably.

Mrs. B: I'd like to add to my husband's experience by saying how it affected me. I always like to share the happenings of the day with him and get his opinion on different things. The last few months I noticed that he was beginning to give me his complete and full attention more and more. It was great, I really loved it! Yet deep inside I had a strange feeling and I couldn't detect what it was. Every time he gave me his full attention this feeling came and I was puzzled.

Then one day I heard him share his experience with other people. As he spoke, it became clear to me what that strange feeling was. He had been loving to the end, giving his full complete attention and I, had not been very considerate of him. I hadn't given him the chance to read in peace. And so for me to love to the end meant to find other opportunities to share with him the happenings of the day. At first it was very hard, it still is, but I've gotten started. •

FORTITUDE

By John Paul II

We continue with the presentation of the talks given by John Paul II in his first four general audiences. The topics chosen were the cardinal virtues. Below is the third talk, reprinted from "The Pope Speaks" (Vol. 24 No. 1, 1979).

To the Audience
of November 15, 1978

Dear brothers and sisters: When Pope John Paul I spoke from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on the day after his election, he recalled, among other things, that during the conclave of August 26, when everything pointed to his being elected, the cardinals near him whispered: "Courage!" The word was probably what he needed at that moment and it must have struck home to him because it came straight to mind again the next day. John Paul I will forgive me for making use of this little secret that he disclosed to us. I think it offers all of us here the best introduction to the theme I intend to develop.

I want to speak today about the third cardinal virtue: the virtue of fortitude. It is to this virtue that we are appealing when we exhort someone to be courageous, as the cardinal near John Paul I at the conclave did when he said: "Courage!"

Who is courageous?

Whom do we regard as a strong man, a man of courage? The phrase usually calls to mind the soldier who in defense of his country risks his own safety and even his life in time of war. But we are aware that we need fortitude even in time of peace. That is why we esteem highly those who distinguish themselves by what is called "civic courage." A testimony to courage is given us by the man who risks his life to save someone about to drown or the person who does what he can to help in natural disasters like fires, floods and so on. Certainly St. Charles, my patron saint, showed this virtue in a high degree when during the plague at Milan he continued his pastoral ministry to the inhabitants of the city.

We also think with admiration of the individuals, for example, who scaled the heights of Everest or the astronauts who were the first to walk on the moon.

Unhailed courage

As these examples show, the manifestations of the virtue of fortitude are many. Some of them are are widely known and enjoy a certain renown. Others are less well-known, although they frequently require even greater virtue. But then, as we said at the beginning, fortitude is a virtue and a cardinal one at that. Permit me to call your attention to some examples to which for the most part little attention is paid but which, nonetheless, are inherent evidence of great and at times even heroic virtue.

I think, for example, of a woman who is already the mother of a large family and who is "advised" by many to do away with the new life she has conceived in her womb, by submitting to an "intervention" that will put an end to the process

of child-bearing but she answers with a firm "No!" She is certainly aware of all the difficulties her "No!" entails — difficulties for herself, for her husband, for the entire family — yet she answers "No!" The new human life she has conceived is too great and "sacred" a value for her to give in to these pressures.

Another example: a man is promised his freedom and an easy career to boot, provided he repudiates his own principles or "approves" of something contrary to his sense of integrity in regard to others. He, too, answers "No!" despite threats on the one hand and allurements on the other. There you have a courageous man!

Homage to the courageous

Many, very many indeed, are the manifestations, often heroic, of fortitude, about which the newspapers say nothing and little is known. Only the human conscience is aware of them — and God knows!

I want to pay homage to all those courageous people who remain unknown. To all those who have the courage to say "No!" or "Yes!" when it costs something! To the people who give an extraordinary testimony to human dignity and profound humanity! Precisely because they are unknown, they deserve our homage and special recognition.

According to the teaching of St. Thomas, the virtue of fortitude exists in the person (1) who is prepared *aggredi pericula*, "to face dangers" and (2) who is prepared *sustinere mala*, "to endure adversity" for a just cause, for the truth, for justice and so on.

The virtue of fortitude always requires some conquest of human weakness and, above all, of fear. By nature the human person spontaneously fears dangers, misfortunes, sufferings. Courageous men are, therefore, to be looked for not only on the battlefield but in the hospital ward or on the bed of pain. Such people were often to be found in the concentration camps and the displaced person camps. They were genuine heroes.

Overcoming fear

Fear at times robs individuals of civic courage when they live in an atmosphere of threats or oppression or persecution. In such circumstances special bravery is shown by those who are able to surmount the "barriers of fear" and bear witness to truth and justice.

To attain to this kind of fortitude a person must in some degree "rise above" his own limitations and "overcome" himself as he runs "the risk" contained in an unknown situation: the risk of being unpopular, the risk of exposing himself to unpleasant consequences, insults, degradations, material losses, perhaps imprisonment or persecution.

I want to pay homage to all those courageous people who remain unknown. To all those who have the courage to say "No!" or "Yes!" when it costs something! To the people who give an extraordinary testimony to human dignity and profound humanity!

To reach this degree of fortitude, a person must be sustained by a great love of the truth and of the good to which he has dedicated himself. The virtue of fortitude grows with the person's capacity for self-sacrifice.

The special character of this virtue was already clearly defined by the ancients. With the coming of Christ it acquired an evangelical, Christian character. The Gospel is directed to human beings who are weak, poor, gentle and humble, peacemakers, merciful. At the same time it issues a constant call to fortitude. It frequently urges: "Do not be afraid!"[1] It teaches men that they must be able to "lay down their lives"[2] for a just cause, for truth, for justice.

I wish here to mention another example, one that comes down to us from 400 years ago but is always alive and relevant. I am speaking of St. Stanislaus Kostka, patron of youth, whose tomb is in the church of San Andrea in Quirinale, here at Rome. It is at Rome, in fact, that this saint finished his life at the age of eighteen.

He was by nature very sensitive and delicate but he was also extremely courageous. Fortitude led him, the son of a noble family, to choose poverty after the example of Christ and to put himself totally at Christ's service. Although his decision met with strong opposition from those around him, great love and great tenacity enabled him to accomplish his purpose, which is expressed in the motto *Ad maiora natus sum*, "I was born for greater things."

To reach the Jesuit novitiate he traveled on foot from Vienna to Rome, trying to evade his pursuers who were determined to turn this "stubborn" young man from his purpose by force.

We, too, need strong men

I know that during November young people from throughout Rome and especially secondary school and university students and novices visit the tomb of St. Stanislaus in the church of San Andrea. I am all for this practice for our generation, too, needs people who can with holy "stubbornness" repeat: *Ad maiora natus sum.* We need strong men!

We need fortitude if we are to be fully human. The only truly prudent person is the one who possesses the virtue of fortitude, just as the only truly just person is the one who has the virtue of fortitude.

Let us pray for this gift of the Holy Spirit that is called the "gift of fortitude." When a person lacks the strength to "overcome" himself for the sake of higher values such as truth, justice, vocation or marital fidelity, this "gift from on high" is needed to make each of us a strong person and, at the right moment, to say to us interiorly: "Courage!" •

ECUMENISM

EVENTS THAT BUILT UNITY

by Gabri Fallacara

"One of the things that impressed me most was that people of different Churches were meeting together. I'd like to thank those who arranged these meetings making it possible for us to know one another. It gave me great joy to see that here there was a great readiness to love one another, rather than a drawing up of a list of errors and grievances among the Churches that could lead to skepticism. Living the words of the Gospel and remaining faithful to them, we can hope to make our contribution to unity. By the end of the conference, I felt unity had grown among us." Another participant commented, "I experienced in an indescribable way the living presence of God among persons who have chosen to do his will. I am truly happy, for perhaps the first time in my life. This joy comes from living the Word of God not a few hours of the day but rather, as Chiara Lubich has said, 24 hours out of 24 hours. This is the goal for the rest of my life, beginning with myself without expecting anything from anyone in return." At the end of the conference another said, "This is the first time I've come to a meeting such as this and I was a little critical at the beginning. Now I know I will never be able to forget this charity we have lived together." Another said, "We feel an increasing urgency for cooperation between the Christians in Geneva and those in Rome. The Second Vatican Council facilitated meetings of this type. During the audience with the Pope in St. Peter's Square, we felt that John Paul II wants unity."

These impressions were shared by some of the two hundred and fifteen participants in a recent ecumenical convention sponsored by the Ecumenical Center of the Focolare Movement, "Center One". The majority of those present were members of the Reformed Church but there were also Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Adventists, Old Catholics, Pentecostals, Presbyterians in addition to the numerous Catholics. They were all Swiss, mainly from the German and French-speaking sectors with some from the Italian-speaking sector of Switzerland.

Reformed pastor Fritz Peier of Zurich was among those present who have known the Focolare Movement for many years and who have been living its spirituality with their own families. For others it was the first time they had participated in a meeting of this type with its emphasis on living together the life proposed by the

April 25th. During the general audience in St. Peter's Square, John Paul II stops to greet the participants in the ecumenical convention sponsored by the Focolare Movement. Here he talks to Endre Zsindely (in the wheelchair), a member of the Reformed Church. Professor Zsindely, from Hungary, teaches History of the Churches at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

Reverend Stjepan Schmidt from the Secretariat for Christian Unity described the activities of this important ecumenical office in the Catholic Church to the participants in a recent ecumenical convention sponsored by the Ecumenical Center of the Focolare Movement.

Gospel in a spirit of mutual love. Through the active participation of all present, many new Christian relationships were built. Those present experienced that this ecumenism of spirit built by testimony and life drew all closer to the goal of unity.

The program for the conference centered on the conversations of Chiara Lubich on the theme "The presence of God in our neighbor". During the days together these talks were studied in depth with the emphasis on living them. The sharing of the latest ecumenical news; the exchange of experiences among Christians of various Churches and ecclesial Communities; various group meetings; a trip to Loppiano, (which is the little international city built by the Focolare Movement); visits to the earliest gathering places of Christians in Rome, including the praying together in the catacombs— these were some of the events of the days together that built unity.

The visit of the Reverend Stjepan Schmidt from the Secretariat for Christian Unity was one of the highpoints of the conference. He described the activities of this important ecumenical organ in the Catholic Church.

The climax of the week was the audience of Pope John Paul II in the square in front of St. Peter's Basilica, among thousands of people from every part of the world. The Pope stopped to speak personally with several participants in the conference including Dr. John Taylor, Pastor Peier and two participants who are paralyzed and were in wheelchairs: Endre Zsindely of the Reformed Church, professor of Church History, and Emil Eigemann, who is Catholic. The Pope's warmth and cordiality impressed everyone. He expressed his desire "to give a little time to each person, to be close to the sick, to everyone." One of those present commented, "He seemed to have all the time in the world to spend with each person". Along the way he stopped to talk to two Gen who were present: one Catholic and one from the Reformed Church.

A Swiss woman, an active member of the Reformed Church related, "Meeting the Focolare Movement has been decisive for me. This is the third time I participated in the ecumenical gatherings but particularly this time I realized that the spirituality animating the Focolare Movement has something very important to offer to the entire ecumenical movement. I'll return home with much more hope for ecumenism than that with which I came. I've a new conviction that unity is possible if in every neighbor we recognize Christ.

GIORDANI: "May the Lord redeem us from the ruins of religious division."

Professor Igino Giordani, head of the Ecumenical Center of the Focolare Movement, "Center One" addressed the ecumenical convention:

"It is a great joy and honor for me to greet you who are giving of your intelligence and your love to the increasingly urgent problem of the reconciliation of all Christians. You will be among us these days as our very dear brothers and sisters. I greet you personally for "Center One" and for all of the Focolare Movement, which began in 1943 with the name Focolare of Unity. Then it was composed of a small group of five or six young women who had consecrated their lives to God and a group of hungry, poor persons in the provincial city of Trent, Italy, where the famous Council was held in the 16th century. Today it is comprised of many thousands of every social condition and country. From the beginning these girls with Chiara Lubich lived unity of spirit. They began a simple ecumenism; their point of departure being, "If we are united, Jesus is among us."

Today each of the 260 Focolare Centers all over the world are centers of unity, not only among Catholics, but also for Christians of other denominations, with the faithful of other religions, and even with those without God.

"Center One" at Rome is the center of the ecumenical activities of the Focolare Movement. Our meetings are usually held here in Rome at Rocca di Papa, or at Ottmaring, Germany, the little ecumenical village built by the Focolare Movement and Lutherans of of the Brotherhood of Common Life, or in the various Mariapolis' throughout the world.

In this spirit of fraternity, nuclei have been formed of members of the Movement who are Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Orthodox, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and so on, all united in ecumenical zeal and often in work and in prayer. They are united by that bond of perfection which is love.

Some of our priests are studying the doctrinal, historical and theological issues; but the effort among the greatest number of focolarini is in achieving spiritual unity, which is the fruit of loving. Love generates unity. Unity of spirit gradually comes to include unity of mind: from faith in Christ to the one truth in Christ.

The great love of Pope John Paul II is inspiring us today, more than ever, to increase our efforts for this beautiful and necessary undertaking, in these times when whole masses of people are led astray by errors in absurd communities, victims of myths and remote ideologies.

The Pope's prayer on behalf of the ecumenical effort invoking the Holy Spirit to "Give us the clarity of vision, the imagination, the prudence and the courage necessary to forge ahead" has been useful both practically and in the religious sense. These sentiments were expressed in important letters written to the Mixed Working Group of the World Council of Churches and to the Pontifical Secretariat for Christian Unity.

In the second letter, addressed to the Vice-President of the Secretariat, Monsignor Ramon Torrella Cascante, the Pope writes, "As the Mixed Working Group of the World Council of Churches and our Secretariat for Unity is about to hold its first meeting since my election to the see of Rome, I am anxious to inform it, through you, of my desire to see the effort intensified with a view to hastening the re-establishment of unity among all Christians. It is urgent for us, in fact, to be able in full agreement to bear witness to our faith in Christ and in his work of salvation.

"Even now, before this unity of faith, sacramental life, and hierarchical ties is re-established, we must find, in all loyalty to our present real situation, the ways that will make it possible to bear witness to the faith we already have in common, and to the incomplete but real communion that already unites us in Christ and the mystery of his Church. For this purpose I hope you will be able to find a way to insure a closer collaboration in all fields in which that is now possible between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches."

This breadth of vision which contains encouragement and stimulus for all the faithful can also be found in the Pope's first encyclical "Redeemer of Man": "With regard to religion," he affirms, "What is dealt with is in the first place religion as a universal phenomenon linked with man's history from the beginning, then the various non-Christian religions, and finally Christianity itself. The Council document on non-Christian religions in particular is filled with deep esteem for the great spiritual values, indeed for the primacy of the spiritual, which in the life of mankind finds expression in religion and then in morality, with direct effects on the whole of culture. The Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, "seeds of the Word", attesting that, though the routes taken might be different, there is but a single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit as expressed in its quest for God and also in its quest, through its tending toward God, for the full dimension of its humanity, or in other words for the full meaning of human life . . . "

The Encyclical draws from such principals these concrete conclusions:

All of us who are Christ's followers must therefore meet and unite around him. This unity in the various fields of the life, tradition, structures and discipline of the individual Christian Churches and ecclesial Communities cannot be brought about without effective work aimed at getting to know each other and removing the obstacles blocking the way to perfect unity. However, we can and must immediately reach and display to the world our unity in proclaiming the mystery of Christ, in revealing the divine dimension and also the human dimension of the Redemption, and in struggling with unwearying perseverance for the dignity that each human being has reached and can continually reach in Christ . . .

"In this unity in mission, which is decided principally by Christ himself, all Christians must find what already unites them, even before their full communion is achieved. This is apostolic and missionary unity, missionary and apostolic unity".

Along with this encouragement, we extend our best wishes for the success of your meeting. Toward that end let us pray with faith to our Lord that he may redeem us also from the ruins of religious division.

Dr. John Taylor, a Methodist, who works in the department of the Non-Christian Religions at the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

TAYLOR: "I've been led here to perceive a new dimension of ecumenism."

Dr. John Taylor, a Methodist, works in the department of the Non-Christian Religions at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. We asked what significance this meeting sponsored by "Center One" had for him.

"It has given me great joy to participate in this convention of the Focolare Movement, and in this program which was to help each other "see Jesus in our neighbor". God chose to reveal himself to humanity in a mysterious way in Jesus Christ who has made us his own: that means that every man and woman finds his roots in God and in his relationship with God, through Jesus.

"What deeply struck us was the simple manner with which the focolarini are able to show how a large community can feel itself to be made up of brothers and sisters, but not in the private or exclusive sense of a family. I think the unity of the Church they are seeking is not something "private",

only for ourselves, but rather a gift given us by God for the world; a sign for the world. I have experience in the ecumenical movement, first as a layman in the Methodist Church of England, a Church that underlines the importance of the laity. What we have liked here is that the Focolare Movement is a lay movement, not a closed sect, and is open unto the Church and the world. As a Methodist who works with Christian friends, I've been led here to perceive a new dimension of ecumenism, that line of ecumenism followed by the Movement.

"I am referring, in particular, to their work in those parts of the world where religious pluralism beyond the Christian family is greatest, with Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. The Focolare Movement gives a sign of hope to the Church in the world. I speak with a certain knowledge of these matters, because, even if I am here on my own behalf, I'm also a representative of the World Council of Churches where I work precisely in the department of non-Christian religions.

"It's impossible to carry on an ecumenical activity at a high level unless we are building on the basis of an ecumenical experience of life at the local level through working and praying together. My experience here has been of friendship among Christians ready to share and ready also to receive from others. For an experience of this kind the focolarini have a special gift for all our Churches.

"I remember my first visit to Rome 20 years ago. I was a student then. I was part of a group of Methodists who were meeting and working to build a base for an ecumenical center. It was already an important beginning for ecumenism; then ecumenism wasn't at the point that it is today. When we Methodist students went to the Papal audience at Castelgandolfo, we were stopped at the gates and asked who we were. Our being Methodist seemed to make people feel uncomfortable then.

"Today I've just returned from the Papal audience in St. Peter's Square with thousands of people: people of many races and cultures, of different Christian families. We felt great gratitude for the way in which God is leading the Church toward that unity for which Jesus prayed. We felt the love of the Pope as he spoke to all peoples as members of the human family. We were moved by his openness, the manner in which he went toward everyone in the name of Christ.

"As someone has said, in this convention it has been possible for us to see how Jesus plainly speaks to us through our neighbor, whether it be the Pope himself, or one of the invalids that were near us during the Papal audience, who touched us deeply, or whether it be the Catholics or those in the Reformed Churches who participated in this convention."

We've learned much more about Jesus through the graces received in these days. We were given a sense of hope and expectation that God will reveal himself to us in the coming days and years through the brothers and sisters that up to now we have never known and from whom we have been separated for many reasons. Now, however, we can have a foretaste of how Jesus will draw closer and present himself through them.●

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